

I was grateful to colead this legislation with our colleague, TOM MALINOWSKI of New Jersey. Thanks to an amendment from our colleague, PETER MEIJER, the bill also urges the administration to expand sanctions on members of the Russian Parliament, the дума, who voted in support of recognizing the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republic, which are illegal fabrications. This vote served as part of Putin's pretext to Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against the people of Ukraine. Anyone who supported that vote must fall under U.S. sanctions—full stop. The administration needs to seriously consider how we can use the frozen Russian assets to help Ukraine fight and continue winning, then rebuild its country. Therefore, I urge all colleagues to join me in supporting this important bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MEIJER).

Mr. MEIJER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Asset Seizure for Ukraine Reconstruction Act, which I was proud to help introduce with my colleague, Congressman MALINOWSKI.

This bill sends a strong and clear message of support to the Ukrainian people and a clear message to Putin and his cronies that their ill-gotten assets are no longer welcome in the United States.

The Asset Seizure for Ukraine Reconstruction Act encourages the administration to take necessary steps allowed by the Constitution and existing laws to seize Russian assets valued over \$2 million and repurpose them towards post-conflict reconstruction and humanitarian assistance in Ukraine.

It also includes my amendment that aims to expand sanctions on members of Russia's Parliament who took the reckless and illegal vote to recognize two breakaway states in the Donbas and authorize Putin to use military force in Ukraine.

Although the Biden administration sanctioned 328 дума members who voted on February 15 for a resolution calling on Putin to recognize the Ukrainian breakaway states, the so-called Luhansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic, it has still not imposed similar sanctions on the remaining дума members and the 154 members of the Federation Council who voted just one week later to authorize Putin's senseless war in Ukraine.

These Russian politicians, as well as the oligarchs who so comfortably store their assets on U.S. territory, play a role in Putin's illegal war, and they all deserve to be punished. Our bill ensures that they do not escape accountability for their complicity in the atrocities against Ukraine, which has left thou-

sands of civilians dead, and many millions displaced.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this critical and urgent bill.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, rather than financing war crimes in Ukraine and multi-million-dollar yachts and real estate for Putin's cronies, this money could be much better spent on urgently needed humanitarian aid and weapons for Ukraine.

This makes sense for the people of Ukraine as well as for the American taxpayer. I, therefore, urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, the Asset Seizure for Ukraine Reconstruction Act, as amended, sends a statement to Vladimir Putin and his cronies that the U.S. Congress will make sure the United States is not a safe haven for their corrupt assets.

The legislation makes it clear that the President should take measures to seize and confiscate their assets subject to U.S. jurisdiction and use the proceeds from such sales to help the Ukrainian people, all while protecting and preserving the rights enshrined in our Constitution.

I thank Representative MALINOWSKI for authoring the bill, and I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PHILLIPS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6930, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

#### GEORGIA SUPPORT ACT

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 923) to support the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Georgia, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 923

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Georgia Support Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.

Sec. 2. United States policy.

#### TITLE I—ASSISTANCE PROVISIONS

Sec. 101. United States-Georgia security assistance.

Sec. 102. Report on United States democracy and governance assistance to Georgia.

Sec. 103. United States cybersecurity cooperation with Georgia.

Sec. 104. Enhanced assistance to combat Russian disinformation and propaganda.

#### TITLE II—SANCTIONS PROVISIONS

Sec. 201. Imposition of sanctions on persons complicit in or responsible for serious human rights abuses, including right to life in Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia occupied by Russia.

#### TITLE III—DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS

Sec. 301. Determination of budgetary effects.

#### SEC. 2. UNITED STATES POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to—

(1) support continued development of democratic values in the Republic of Georgia, including free and fair elections, an independent and accountable judiciary, public sector transparency and accountability, the rule of law, and anticorruption efforts;

(2) support Georgia's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders;

(3) support Georgia's capacity to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity from further Russian aggression or encroachment on Georgian territory in light of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine;

(4) support the right of the people of Georgia to freely determine their future and make independent and sovereign choices on foreign and security policy, including regarding their country's relationship with other nations and international organizations, without interference, intimidation, or coercion by other countries;

(5) support Georgia's Euro-Atlantic and European integration;

(6) not recognize territorial changes effected by force, including the illegal invasions and occupations of Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia by the Russian Federation;

(7) condemn ongoing detentions, kidnappings, and other human rights violations committed in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia forcibly occupied by the Russian Federation, including the recent killings of Georgian citizens Archil Tatumashvili, Giga Otkhazoria, Davit Basharuli, and others in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia; and

(8) support peaceful conflict resolution in Georgia, including by urging the Russian Federation to fully implement the European Union-mediated ceasefire agreement of August 12, 2008, and supporting the establishment of international security mechanisms in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, all of which are important for lasting peace and security on the ground.

**TITLE I—ASSISTANCE PROVISIONS****SEC. 101. UNITED STATES-GEORGIA SECURITY ASSISTANCE.**

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) In fiscal year 2021, the United States provided Georgia with \$2,200,000 in assistance under chapter 5 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2347 et seq.; relating to international military education and training) and \$35,000,000 in assistance under section 23 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2763; relating to the Foreign Military Financing Program) and in 2021 announced the Georgia Defense and Deterrence Enhancement Initiative (GDDEI) to enable further modernization of the Georgian Ministry of Defense and the Georgian Defense Forces.

(2) Georgia has been a longstanding NATO-aspirant country.

(3) Georgia has contributed substantially to Euro-Atlantic peace and security through participation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Resolute Support Missions in Afghanistan as one of the largest troop contributors.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that United States assistance to the Republic of Georgia under chapter 5 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and section 23 of the Arms Export Control Act should be increased.

(c) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the United States, in consultation with the Republic of Georgia, to enhance Georgia's deterrence, resilience, and self-defense, including through appropriate assistance to improve the capabilities of Georgia's armed forces.

(d) REVIEW OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO GEORGIA.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the heads of other appropriate United States departments and agencies, shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report reviewing United States security assistance to the Republic of Georgia.

(2) COMPONENTS.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of needed security assistance to improve Georgia's capacity to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity from further invasion of Georgian territory by Russian forces, including an assessment of need for anti-armor, anti-air, and anti-tank weapons, as well as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities.

(B) A detailed review of all United States security assistance to Georgia from fiscal year 2008 to the date of the submission of such report.

(C) An assessment of threats to Georgian independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, including an assessment of changes to the force posture or intent of Russian forces occupying Georgian territory.

(D) An assessment of Georgia's capabilities to defend itself, including a five-year strategy to enhance Georgia's deterrence, resilience, and self-defense capabilities that incorporates plans to address the capability gaps subject to the assessment described in subparagraph (A).

(3) FORM.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

**SEC. 102. REPORT ON UNITED STATES DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE ASSISTANCE TO GEORGIA.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act,

the Secretary of State, in consultation with the heads of other appropriate Federal departments and agencies as appropriate, shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report on United States democracy and governance assistance to the Republic of Georgia.

(b) COMPONENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A description of goals for United States democracy and governance assistance to Georgia and its democratic institutions, including how such assistance is supporting Georgia's stated goals for European integration.

(2) An assessment of the impact of United States democracy and governance assistance to Georgia since fiscal year 2008, including challenges to achieving the goals described in paragraph (1).

(3) An assessment of Georgia's progress relating to freedom of the press and support for independent media, including steps to hold accountable those responsible for attacks on independent media and on LGBTQ rights activists on July 5, 2021, in Tbilisi.

(4) An assessment of Georgia's progress on strengthening its democratic institutions, including through electoral and judicial reforms necessary to build public confidence.

(5) A description of barriers and challenges to United States investment in the Georgian economy, as well as an assessment of how support from the United States International Development Finance Corporation in Georgia could help create a better developed and more transparent investment climate.

(c) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

**SEC. 103. UNITED STATES CYBERSECURITY COOPERATION WITH GEORGIA.**

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State should take the following actions, commensurate with United States interests, to assist the Republic of Georgia to improve its cybersecurity:

(1) Provide Georgia such support as may be necessary to secure government computer networks from malicious cyber intrusions, particularly such networks that defend the critical infrastructure of Georgia.

(2) Provide Georgia support in reducing reliance on Russian information and communications technology.

(3) Assist Georgia to build its capacity, expand cybersecurity information sharing, and cooperate on international cyberspace efforts.

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report on United States cybersecurity cooperation with the Republic of Georgia.

(2) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include information relating to the following:

(A) United States efforts to strengthen Georgia's ability to prevent, mitigate, and respond to cyber incidents, including through training, education, technical assistance, capacity building, and cybersecurity risk management strategies.

(B) The potential for new areas of collaboration and mutual assistance between the United States and Georgia to address shared cyber challenges, including cybercrime, critical infrastructure protection, and resilience against automated, distributed threats.

(C) NATO's efforts to help Georgia develop technical capabilities to counter cyber threats.

**SEC. 104. ENHANCED ASSISTANCE TO COMBAT RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA.**

(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the United States to enhance the capabilities of the Republic of Georgia to combat Russian disinformation and propaganda campaigns intended to undermine the sovereignty and democratic institutions of Georgia, while promoting the freedom of the press.

(b) REQUIRED STRATEGY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the heads of other appropriate United States departments and agencies, shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report outlining a strategy to implement the policy described in subsection (a).

(2) COMPONENTS.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A detailed assessment of Russian disinformation and propaganda efforts across all media platforms targeting the Republic of Georgia.

(B) An assessment of Georgia's capabilities to deter and combat such Russian efforts and to support the freedom of the press.

(C) A detailed strategy coordinated across all relevant United States departments and agencies to enhance Georgia's capabilities to deter and combat such Russian efforts.

(3) FORM.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

**TITLE II—SANCTIONS PROVISIONS****SEC. 201. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS ON PERSONS COMPLICIT IN OR RESPONSIBLE FOR SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, INCLUDING RIGHT TO LIFE IN GEORGIAN REGIONS OF ABKHAZIA AND TSCHINVALI REGION/SOUTH OSSETIA OCCUPIED BY RUSSIA.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall impose on a foreign person the sanctions described in subsection (b) if the President determines that such foreign person, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act—

(1) is responsible for, complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing the commission of serious human rights abuses in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia forcibly occupied by the Russian Federation;

(2) is materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing significant financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to, a foreign person described in paragraph (1); or

(3) is owned or controlled by a foreign person, or is acting on behalf of a foreign person, described in paragraph (1).

(b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions described in this subsection are the following:

(1) ASSET BLOCKING.—The exercise of all powers granted to the President by the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of a person determined by the President to be a person described in subsection (a) if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person, including by taking any of the actions described in paragraph (1) of section 203(a) of such Act (50 U.S.C. 1702(a)).

(2) INADMISSIBILITY OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS.—

(A) INELIGIBILITY FOR VISAS AND ADMISSION TO THE UNITED STATES.—A person determined by the President to be a person described in subsection (a) is—

(i) inadmissible to the United States;

(ii) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

(iii) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(B) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—A person determined by the President to be a person described in subsection (a) is subject to the following:

(i) Revocation of any visa or other entry documentation regardless of when the visa or other entry documentation is or was issued.

(ii) A revocation under clause (i) shall—

(I) take effect immediately; and

(II) automatically cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the foreign person's possession.

(C) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OBJECTIVES.—Sanctions under subparagraph (A) shall not apply to an individual if admitting such individual into the United States would further important law enforcement objectives or is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations of the United States.

(c) WAIVER.—The President may waive the application of sanctions under subsection (b) with respect to a person if the President determines that such a waiver is important to the national interests of the United States.

(d) IMPLEMENTATION; PENALTIES.—

(1) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may exercise all authorities provided to the President under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) to carry out subsection (b)(1).

(2) PENALTIES.—A person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of subsection (b)(1) or any regulation, license, or order issued to carry out such subsection shall be subject to the penalties specified in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of such section.

(e) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and at least once every 180 days thereafter for a period not to exceed two years, the President, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, shall transmit to Congress a detailed report with respect to persons that have been determined to have engaged in activities described in subsection (a).

(f) EXCEPTION RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF GOODS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The authorities and requirements to impose sanctions under this title shall not include the authority or requirement to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

(2) GOOD DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “good” means any article, natural or man-made substance, material, supply or manufactured product, including inspection and test equipment and excluding technical data.

### TITLE III—DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS

#### SEC. 301. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEUSER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 923, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the author of the Georgia Support Act and as co-chair of the Congressional Georgia Caucus to express my support for this legislation, which we introduced with my Republican colleague and Georgia Caucus co-chair, Mr. ADAM KINZINGER of Illinois.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation has twice passed the House with broad bipartisan support. This bipartisan effort enhances the U.S.-Georgia relationship on several fronts by bolstering security assistance, promoting democratic governance reforms, enhancing cooperation to fight Russian disinformation, and strengthening economic ties.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate, as Russia continues its tragic and horrific invasion of sovereign Ukrainian territory, that we reflect on 2008 and the invasion by Russia and continued occupation of sovereign Georgian territory in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

To this day, Russian troops committing abhorrent violations of human rights, international humanitarian law, and war crimes in sovereign Ukrainian territory are the same troops that have fomented unrest, aided separatist movements, and committed clear and evident violations of human rights for the past 14 years in the Russian-occupied parts of Georgia.

This bill directs the United States Government to enforce targeted sanctions on malign actors committing these violations in Russian-occupied territory.

The Georgia Support Act also requires the administration to examine how best we can utilize the \$35 million or more of United States aid that we provide Georgia in security assistance every year and reinforces U.S. policy to

never recognize Russian sovereignty over Georgia territory.

As the number one per capita contributor of forces in Afghanistan, Georgia has demonstrated its dedication to security cooperation with the West. The United States must continue to reciprocate by helping Georgia develop the capacity to defend itself against further incursion of Russian forces.

Mr. Speaker, attacks on Georgian sovereignty have not been simply through the occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as bad as that is. This bill directs the administration to enhance cooperation with our Georgian partners to help them defend themselves from the various cyberattacks and disinformation and propaganda campaigns Russia has launched with the goal of undermining the sovereignty and democratic institutions of the Country of Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, I traveled to Tbilisi numerous times, both with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, of which I am President, and with the House Democracy Partnership to meet with government officials, civil society, and the Georgian people.

I am pleased that this iteration of the Georgia Support Act seeks to buttress Georgian democratic institutions through U.S. democracy and governance programs that promote Georgian judicial independence, electoral reforms, freedom of the press, and accountability for attacks on independent media and Tbilisi Pride activists in 2021.

This legislation provides an opportunity for the United States to express its robust, bipartisan support for Georgia's sovereignty, continued democratic and economic development, and security against renewed Russian aggression.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Georgia Support Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,  
Washington, DC, April 21, 2022.

Hon. GREGORY MEEKS,  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MEEKS: This letter is to advise you that the Committee on the Judiciary has now had an opportunity to review the provisions in H.R. 923, the “Georgia Support Act,” that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction. I appreciate your consulting with us on those provisions. The Judiciary Committee has no objection to your including them in the bill for consideration on the House floor, and to expedite that consideration is willing to forgo action on H.R. 923, with the understanding that we do not thereby waive any future jurisdictional claim over those provisions or their subject matters.

In the event a House-Senate conference on this or similar legislation is convened, the Judiciary Committee reserves the right to request an appropriate number of conferees to address any concerns with these or similar provisions that may arise in conference.

Please place this letter into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have

worked regarding this matter and others between our committees.

Sincerely,

JERROLD NADLER,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
Washington, DC, April 21, 2022.

Hon. JERROLD NADLER,  
Committee on the Judiciary,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN NADLER: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 923, Georgia Support Act, as amended. I appreciate your willingness to work cooperatively on this legislation.

I acknowledge that provisions of the bill fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary under House Rule X, and that your Committee will forgo action on H.R. 923 to expedite floor consideration. I further acknowledge that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the matters contained in the bill that fall within your jurisdiction. I also acknowledge that your Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this or similar legislation moves forward, and will support the appointment of Committee on the Judiciary conferees during any House-Senate conference convened on this legislation.

Lastly, I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. Thank you again for your cooperation regarding the legislation. I look forward to continuing to work with you as the measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

GREGORY W. MEEKS,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
Washington, DC, April 22, 2022.

Hon. RICHARD NEAL,  
Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN NEAL: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 923, Georgia Support Act, as amended. I appreciate your willingness to work cooperatively on this legislation.

I acknowledge that provisions of the bill fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means under House Rule X, and that your Committee will forgo action on H.R. 923 to expedite floor consideration. I further acknowledge that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the matters contained in the bill that fall within your jurisdiction. I also acknowledge that your Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this or similar legislation moves forward, and will support the appointment of Committee on Ways and Means conferees during any House-Senate conference convened on this legislation.

Lastly, I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. Thank you again for your cooperation regarding the legislation. I look forward to continuing to work with you as the measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

GREGORY W. MEEKS,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,  
Washington, DC, April 25, 2022.

Hon. GREGORY MEEKS,  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MEEKS: In recognition of the desire to expedite consideration of H.R. 923, Georgia Support Act, the Committee on Ways and Means agrees to waive formal consideration of the bill as to provisions that fall within the rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The Committee on Ways and Means takes this action with the mutual understanding that we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues within our jurisdiction. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letter on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 923.

Sincerely,

RICHARD E. NEAL,  
Chairman.

Mr. MEUSER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support as well of H.R. 923, the Georgia Support Act.

Since Russia invaded Georgia in 2008, Putin has illegally occupied 20 percent of Georgia's territory, embroiling Georgia in an existential battle for its sovereignty.

The ongoing, flagrant invasion of Ukraine proves that Putin will stop at nothing to accomplish his heinous goals. Our allies in Georgia need strong U.S. support now more than ever. It must be made abundantly clear to Putin that the American people stand with Georgia and will not tolerate a further incursion into Georgia's territory.

This bill will reaffirm U.S. support for Georgia's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity by authorizing a review of security assistance to Georgia to determine key capability gaps, as well as looking at U.S.-Georgia cybersecurity cooperation and assistance to combat Russian disinformation.

□ 1345

Russian meddling in Georgia's political processes and active disinformation campaigns continue to threaten Georgia's democratic trajectory.

But critically, the bill also addresses the need for Georgia to maintain its focus on democracy and governance development in order to stay on its Euro-Atlantic path.

Finally, this bill authorizes the President to impose sanctions on individuals responsible for human rights abuses in Georgia's occupied territories, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

By erecting and constantly moving the border further into Georgia's terri-

tory, restricting freedom of movement and conducting arbitrary detentions, killings, and kidnappings, Putin has jeopardized the lives of all Georgians on both sides of the boundary line with his occupied territories.

Passing this bill is a timely opportunity to show support for an ally that has been on the front line of Putin's belligerence for well over a decade.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEUSER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow Putin to believe he can turn to Georgia next after his despicable invasion of Ukraine. Georgia, a longstanding U.S. partner in a tough neighborhood, has for too long been on the front line of Putin's unchecked aggression.

This bill passed in the House the last two Congresses by an overwhelming bipartisan majority, and I urge my colleagues to support our Georgian allies yet again.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank my friend for his support. And I think it is very important that there be a clarion statement from this Congress, not only about Ukraine, but about other nations that are threatened by Russian aggression; Georgia and Moldova are two of the most prominent.

It is critical that the Congress speak with one voice to those nations, to those peoples, and to Vladimir Putin and Russia, should he have further designs on either of those two countries.

So I think this is an important piece of legislation. I urge its passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I, for many, many decades, have had a strong and very deep commitment to the people of the Republic of Georgia. As a matter of fact, after Russia invaded South Ossetia and Abkhazia in 2008, I traveled to Tbilisi, and spent a week there, with a people at war.

As it turned out, there were three young people from my district who were stuck behind enemy lines. One being held up in and very fearful in Abkhazia, and two who were in South Ossetia. And when I went, several Members of Congress gave me names of people that were also behind the South Ossetia and Abkhazia Russia-dominated lines. It was very tense, with Chechens walking around with guns, drunk and committing atrocities. We were all concerned.

Within a week or so, we got all of the children out. We worked with the OSCE mission there, we worked with the International Committee of the Red Cross, and with the French, who had the chair in office that year for the European Union. That ambassador actually traveled to the place where the two children in South Ossetia were, put them in his car, and brought them to safety.

So, Georgia and the importance of our strong friendship with the Georgian people,

and their heroic resistance to Russia, has always been close to my heart.

And also, I note that past is prologue.

The same justifications Putin used for invading Crimea—that they were going in to liberate Russians—was the exact same pretext used in Georgia. What a lie and deception that was and is. Putin simply seeks to reconstitute the Soviet empire under himself.

So I'm very supportive of the intent behind the legislation.

I had offered an amendment at markup, which was voted down on strictly partisan lines, which I believe would have made this legislation more precise and also improved its chance for passage in the Senate.

Simply put, I had offered an amendment that would have replaced the vague and imprecise “serious human rights abuses” language with the phrase “Gross violations of internationally-recognized human rights,” which has a long-standing, defined meaning in U.S. law, as codified in the Foreign Assistance Act, 22 U.S.C. 2304(d)(1).

To wit, “gross violations of internationally recognized human rights” includes “torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, prolonged detention without charges and trial, causing the disappearance of persons by the abduction and clandestine detention of those persons, and other flagrant denial of the right to life, liberty or the security of the person.”

The reason this is relevant is because recently, our colleagues across the aisle sought to import the imprecise “serious human rights abuses” language into the Global Magnitsky Act, and again had rejected offers to negotiate compromise language that would have tied such abuses to specific treaties the United States had ratified, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention Against Torture.

As a result, that held up passage of the Global Magnitsky Act, which otherwise had broad bipartisan support in the Senate, and caused a stalemate until the parties agreed to revert to the previous, precisely-defined “gross violations of internationally-recognized human rights” language.

Similarly, this Georgia bill otherwise enjoys broad bipartisan support, but for the vague and imprecise formulation, which now will likely have to be fixed in the Senate.

I also note that I had tried to find a solution which could have kept the “serious human rights abuses” language, but would have tied it to abuses that were specified elsewhere in the legislation so as to avoid vagueness, namely “detentions, kidnappings, and other human rights violations committed in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia forcibly occupied by the Russian Federation including [] recent killings” and similar violations of human rights.”

My colleagues across the aisle, I anticipate will again say that we have used “serious human rights abuses” in other country- and region-specific legislation. Leaving aside the fact that that was before the recent attempted Global Magnitsky partisan end run, I would also point out that “serious human rights abuses” were tied to specific abuses specified in the legislation at issue.

Thus in past legislation we called out “serious abuse or violation of human rights against persons associated with the protests in Nicaragua that began on April 18, 2018,” or “seri-

ous human rights abuses connected with forced labor” in Xinjiang.

That was all that we were asking for here—either adopt a precise statutory definition, “gross violations of internationally-recognized human rights,” or tie “serious human rights abuses” to what is specified in the legislation.

But instead, we got a party line vote and a raw exercise of power, marring what should have been a unified statement of support of the Republic of Georgia and opposition to the butcher Vladimir Putin.

I have been in Congress for over 40 years. I have been in the minority, and I have been in the majority. On bills like this, we used to try to find unity.

I am sad to say that the raw exercise of political power that we have seen with regard to both the Global Magnitsky bill and this Georgia Support Act, and the unwillingness to seek compromise in the face of legitimate concerns that an ideologically-driven administration could use vague language to pursue an agenda that is not shared by over half the country, has disappointed me.

I am not going to oppose this bill, given the larger context of support for the oppressed people of Georgia. Majorities come, and majorities go. I wish that my colleagues across the aisle had been willing to compromise and find common ground, but they did not.

With passage, it is on to the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 923, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

#### EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR MOLDOVA'S DEMOCRACY, INDEPENDENCE, AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND STRENGTHENING UNITED STATES AND MOLDOVA RELATIONS

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 833) expressing support for Moldova's democracy, independence, and territorial integrity and strengthening United States and Moldova relations, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

##### H. RES. 833

Whereas the Republic of Moldova gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991;

Whereas the United States established diplomatic relations with Moldova on February 18, 1992, and the 2 countries have since enjoyed expanded and positive relations;

Whereas United States assistance to Moldova and the Strategic Dialogue between

the United States and Moldova, which was launched on March 3, 2014, has strengthened the relationship between the 2 countries and focused on advancing shared interests in democracy, good governance, rule of law, anticorruption, energy independence, economic development, and security cooperation;

Whereas Congress and State and local communities have a history of engaging with Moldovan young leaders, civil society, and Members of Parliament through official exchanges;

Whereas Moldova ratified an association agreement containing comprehensive free trade provisions with the European Union in 2014 and the agreement became fully effective in July 2016;

Whereas Moldova's main trading partner is the European Union;

Whereas Moldova is a member of the European Union's Eastern Partnership;

Whereas since the Russian Federation's unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Moldova has opened its border to refugees fleeing Ukraine;

Whereas, on March 3, 2022, Moldova submitted an application to become a member of the European Union;

Whereas the Moldovan 2020 Presidential and 2021 parliamentary elections resulted in a government with a mandate to fight corruption, reinvigorate economic reforms, enhance judicial independence, revitalize European integration efforts, and strengthen relations with the United States;

Whereas, in November 2020, Moldova elected its first female President, Maia Sandu, and since August 6, 2021, women serve as both Moldova's head of state and head of government;

Whereas according to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the most recent elections were “well administered, competitive and fundamental freedoms were largely respected”;

Whereas in a judgment in 2004, the European Court of Human Rights found that Moldova's separatist region of Transnistria was created with the support of the Government of the Russian Federation and considered it “under the effective authority or at least decisive influence” of the Kremlin;

Whereas the United States supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova and on that basis participates as an observer in the “5+2” negotiations to find a comprehensive settlement that will provide a special status for Transnistria within Moldova's internationally recognized borders;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation maintains a contingent of military forces and a stockpile of military equipment and ammunition within the Transnistrian region constituting an occupation of Moldovan territory and a violation of Moldova's territorial sovereignty;

Whereas the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Mission to Moldova, and the Government of Moldova have called upon the Kremlin to remove its troops from the territory of Moldova;

Whereas, in July 2017, the Moldovan Parliament adopted a declaration calling on the Kremlin to withdraw its troops from Moldova;

Whereas, on September 22, 2021, Moldovan President Maia Sandu addressed the United Nations General Assembly and called for the Kremlin to withdraw its troops from the Transnistrian region;

Whereas Moldova has been a valued and reliable partner in promoting global security